



In the Words of Hoosier Soldiers: Life in Camp & on the Battlefield

Middle and High School Lessons

The Colonel Eli Lilly
Civil War Museum,
An Indiana War Memorials Museum

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Description of Lessons

A good deal of the Civil War soldiers' time was spent in camp. The letters and journals penned during this time provide a valuable chronicle of their thoughts and emotions. Students can identify with personal correspondence, particularly when many of these soldiers were not much older than secondary students are today. The glory and excitement of war is shown to be tempered through the words of men who missed their families. They found themselves living in conditions foreign to their normal surroundings and pondered the uncertainty of the future. These lessons provide students with an opportunity to examine primary sources in order to discover the Civil War soldiers' way of life in camp and on the battlefield.

This set of lessons includes the topics of mustering in, life in camp and one man's experiences on the battlefield at Shiloh. Primary sources are provided for each topic and can be used as a teacher reference or student handout. Ideas for a variety of activities are provided.

INSERT ACADEMIC STANDARDS HERE

Objectives

1. The students will be able to list and explain several factors that influenced men in Indiana to enlist for service in the Civil War.
2. The students will be able to describe the equipment necessary for outfitting the soldiers.
3. The students will be able to create a packing list for soldiers on the march.
4. The students will be able to compare and contrast experiences of several soldiers through the use of primary sources.

LESSON 1

THE CALL TO ARMS

Activities

1. The Call to Arms (Handout 1) is an account of one young man's reaction to the firing on Fort Sumter. Billy Davis lived in Hopewell, Indiana in 1861, and excerpts from his diary are included in the reading. Discuss with students Billy's feelings about the importance of enlisting and explain how some of the reasons he listed may have influenced his decision. Several questions below can be used to guide the discussion.
 - a. Why do you think General Beauregard's firing on Fort Sumter caused so much excitement in a small town in Indiana?
 - b. W. H. Seward was Lincoln's Secretary of War. Why do you suppose he thought the war would last no longer than three months?
 - c. Billy knew of several men's experiences in previous wars. Who were those people, and what sort of an impression did they give Billy of soldiering?
 - d. Ask students to relate what they know about family members or friends who may have served in World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, Desert Storm, or in any other military action. Discuss the difference in public support of Vietnam and Desert Storm and how the support may have influenced peoples' desire to serve or enlist. What parallels are there to Billy's situation?
 - e. Billy wrote: "I feel that if I do not go that I will be disgraced, and by staying at home will bring reproach (disgrace) upon the family name." What did he mean by this, and why do you think he felt this way?

HANDOUT 1

THE CALL TO ARMS

Did You Know?

- Indiana provided 208,367 soldiers during the Civil War.
- About three-quarters of Hoosier men of military age served in the Civil War.

Vocabulary

bolster: to support

camaraderie: trust and fellowship among friends

enlist: to enroll in the armed services

infantry: soldiers who march and fight on foot

mustered in: enrolling of recruits

regiment: ten companies (1000 men) led by a colonel, known by number and state

BACKGROUND

When General Beauregard fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, a wave of excitement and anticipation washed through the entire nation. Learning of this news, Hoosiers heeded the call to arms and **enlisted** in what they felt would be a swift victory for the Union. Many men **enlisted** immediately, and their families set out to provide what supplies they could to send with their sons. The men were first sent to various nearby camps in Indiana. Here they would go to be **mustered in** and trained before being sent to the camps in other states and on to the battlefield. The men were assigned to companies with others from their hometown or area. While in training at camp, families were able to visit their **enlisted** sons. Being in training with people they knew and receiving visitors from home helped to develop **camaraderie** of the troops, **bolster** their spirits and reinforce their belief that the Union was worth fighting for. Billy Davis of Hopewell, Indiana (near Franklin in Johnson County) kept a journal starting with April 12, 1861. He **enlisted** soon after the firing on Fort Sumter and **mustered in** at Camp Morton, the original site of the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis. He became a part of the 7th Indiana Volunteer **Infantry Regiment**. His experiences echo those of many Hoosier men who served their state and country during this time. Billy's journal provides insight into the enthusiasm of the men at the start of the war and provides a valuable record of how they were outfitted by their families and the Union Army.

BILLY DAVIS: A HOOSIER CIVIL WAR SOLDIER
DIARY EXCERPTS

Focus Your Reading

1. Read the following quotes from Billy's journal and discuss what factors and which people influenced Billy to **enlist**.

Friday April 12, 1861

News reached us that General Beauregard had fired upon Fort Sumter. This news, though not entirely unexpected, was the occasion of great excitement and seemed almost to stop business, nothing else was talked of during the day.

Wednesday April 17. 1861

About the first thing heard this morning was the fife and drum. There is much enthusiasm. Many of the young men are enrolling their names. I want to go yet do not know what to do. Had a long talk with Mr. J L Jones Senior, who was a volunteer in the War of 1812, his incidents of camp and campaign were quite interesting. The way the people all over the north and west are enlisting and otherwise responding to the President's call, the war, as W. H. Seward says, will not last over three months.

I know my grandfather was a soldier in the War of 1812. I have heard him speak of different things...and I heard father say that my great-grandfather was a Revolutionary soldier, and that he (Father) enlisted for the Blackhawk War, but was rejected. I feel that if I do not go that I will be disgraced, and by staying at home will bring reproach upon the family name...In the afternoon, John Hutchison and James Alexander, next door clerks, and I agreed together to enroll our names, I realized a relief from my feeling of doubt and suspense, and yet I know that I felt a trembling sensation when writing my name. Don't believe I ever felt so attached to the old flag as I do today. After volunteering I went to the store and we settled, then I walked out home.

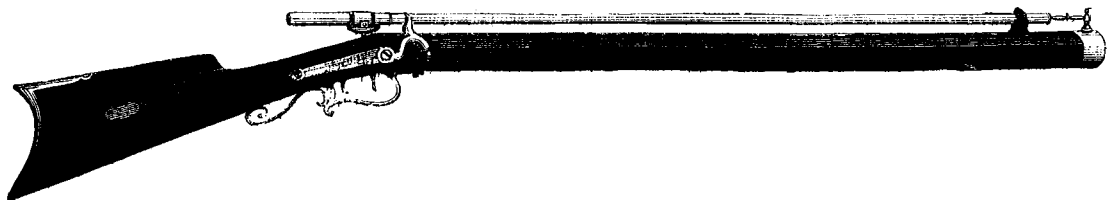
Source: Skidmore, Richard S., *The Civil War Journal of Billy Davis: From Hopewell, Indiana to Port Republic, Virginia*. The Nugget Publishers: Hanover, Indiana, 1996, pages 1-2.

LESSON 2

MUSTERING IN, EQUIPPING AND TRAINING

Activities

1. Prior to reading the following selections from Billy Davis' journal, have students make a list of what items they think Billy will need as a soldier for the Union Army. List these items on the board.
2. Provide students with a copy of the journal entries (Handout 2). Have several students read the journal entries aloud. Ask students to make a list of all the items (supplied by his family and the Union) that Billy had to carry. Have students estimate what they think the weight of Billy's equipment might be. This can be done in pairs or small groups.
3. What Billy was expected to carry and wear weighed about 50 pounds. On a day prior to the lesson, have a student volunteer bring a book bag to class filled with all textbooks from his or her locker. Weigh the book bag and contents. Provide a book bag (or if possible, a camping-type backpack) weighted with contents totaling about 50 pounds. Give students an opportunity to wear the backpack.
4. Discuss the difficulties that would be encountered from carrying such equipment 30 miles per day.



HANDOUT 2

EQUIPPING, MUSTERING IN AND TRAINING

Did You Know?

- When soldiers marched, they had to carry their clothing, rations, ammunition, and weapons. This equipment weighed from 30 to 50 pounds.
- The Union soldiers made about \$13 per month.
- It was not unusual for soldiers on the march to cover 30 miles per day.

Vocabulary

accouterments (accoutrements): a soldier's equipment, not including weapons or garments

haversack: canvas shoulder bag used to hold a soldier's rations

housewife: a small cloth or leather bag that could be rolled up, used to contain a soldier's sewing supplies

loth (variation of loath): reluctant or very unwilling

scabbard: a sheath or cover for a knife, bayonet, sword, etc.

BILLY DAVIS: A HOOSIER CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

DIARY EXCERPTS

Billy Davis' family worked together to outfit him with needed items before he left for camp. Camp Morton in Indianapolis was located about 19 blocks north of the Circle, in the area that is today bounded by 19th Street, Talbott Avenue, 22nd Street, and Central Avenue. It had been the 36-acre site of the State Fairgrounds, and buildings had hurriedly been constructed to initially house up to seven thousand men who would be gathering for training. When Camp Morton became too crowded, Billy and the 7th Indiana Volunteer Infantry were moved to Camp Dumont, about a mile from Camp Morton. It was in these camps that Billy would receive the training and additional equipment necessary for soldiering.

Hopewell, Monday, April 22, 1861

We were up early and most of the house folk were loth to have me volunteer, now that the time for starting is so near, were tender on the subject, said but little and went quietly about the preparations. Mother provided shirts, collars, drawers, three pair home knit wool socks, several pocket handkerchiefs, and two quilts;

sisters provided an arrangement (a housewife), containing buttons, needles, pins, threads, yarns, a steel thimble, etc. and a place for my pocket scissors. I had provided myself with a large pocket knife, two combs, towels and toilet soap, and a pocket diary for recording incidents of note, and the Messrs. Jones had presented me with a pocket revolver of six chambers saying that I might get into close quarters and need it. This was my outfit.

Camp Dumont, May 14, 1861

...Soon the regiment were furnished with a heavy leather box with tin box apartments for forty rounds of ammunition, a leather box for Caps and leather Scabbard for the Bayonet, and two leather belts; one for the waist fastened with a brass buckle marked US, the other to go over the shoulder. Were not given any Cartridges or Caps. When all were supplied with accouterments we marched back to camp where we rested till 2 p.m., regimental Drill at 4, and Parade at 5 p.m.

May 18, 1861

...Received our Blankets and Straps for carrying them. Regiment were furnished with blank Cartridges.

May 23, 1861

Were each furnished with a pair of socks and Haversack and a Rubber Blanket, to shelter us from the rain. Have orders to clean up our muskets.

Source: Skidmore, Richard S., *The Civil War Journal of Billy Davis: From Hopewell, Indiana to Port Republic, Virginia*, The Nugget Publishers, Hanover, Indiana, (1996) pages 4, 25, and 26.

Milligan's Patent Mess Kettle,

Arranged for four Officers, weight 15 pounds, price \$12,
AND

MILLIGAN'S ARMY TENT STOVE.
Patent applied for.

Stove with Pipe
&c. Packed.

Weight 9 1/2 pounds, price \$6 00. Sold by Dealers in Mil-
itary Goods throughout the country. Wholesale Depot,
No. 4 Platt Street, New York.
Send for Circulars.

MILLIGAN BROS.

LESSON 3

LIFE IN CAMP

Activities

1. Handout 3 describes the soldiers' life in camp including their diet, routine, and living arrangements. Discuss the weight and contents of a soldier's ration as described in the account. If you can, procure an MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) from an Army Surplus Store and examine and "share" some of the rations provided for the soldiers of today.
2. Students can create their own "letters from camp." To familiarize students with soldier slang, the following web site is a good source:
www.geocities.com/Pentagon/8279/soldier.html. Sponsored by the 9th Massachusetts Battery and maintained by Lorrie Farr, Web Master, this page provides a list of words to assist students in understanding soldier slang of the Civil War.
3. Soldiers during the Civil War were most likely taught roundhand script when (or if) they had learned to write. Obtain a book on calligraphy from the school Media Center and conduct a "writing practice" lesson with students in roundhand. Assign students to write a "letter from camp", writing in roundhand as a challenge. An optional technique would be writing a letter as soldiers would when they were short on paper. Soldiers would write from left to right and from top to bottom until both sides of the page were filled. They would then turn the paper on its "side" so that what they had just written was vertical, and they would again proceed to write from left to right and top to bottom over what they had just written. Called "cross hatching", the effect was getting two papers' worth of letter out of one piece.
5. Discuss the different types of tents the soldiers used. The Silbey tents were 18 feet around and 12 feet high, and they slept from 12 to 20 men. The "A" tents were 7 square feet and slept four to six men. Plot out these measurements on the classroom floor so that students can see exactly how much space each man was allotted. If possible, set up a two-person camping tent in the classroom to illustrate the approximate space of a Dog Tent.
5. The National Park Service at Harper's Ferry provides pictures of drawings of Minie balls and musketry (<http://www.nps.gov/hafe/burton-draw.htm>). Make copies for display or make transparencies for projecting onto a screen.

HANDOUT 3

LIFE IN CAMP

Vocabulary

reveille: first bugle call of the day that awakens soldiers

sentry duty: guard duty

sutler: peddlers who would set up tents or shops in camp for selling goods to soldiers

The soldiers' day began at 5:00 AM with **reveille**. Reveille sounded and the men had about 15 minutes to assemble for roll call. Some would receive working orders for the day. These consisted of tasks such as **sentry duty**, working around camp cleaning, carrying supplies to designated places, chopping wood or even building living quarters. Those who weren't given duties would drill. Drills consisted of learning and practicing formations, marching, and learning to use weapons. One of the newest weapons to be used in the Civil War was the rifle musket. It had grooved curves inside the barrel that caused the bullets to spin. These rifles used "Minie" balls, named after their French inventor. The Minie balls traveled much farther and faster than the previously used bullets, and they were much more accurate. They could hit a target as far as a mile away.

Around noon, the bugle call would again sound for dinner (lunch). Meals in camp were simple.

"Here is just what a single ration comprised, that is, what a soldier was entitled to have in one day. He should have had twelve ounces of pork or bacon, or one pound four ounces of salt or fresh beef; one pound six ounces of soft bread or flour, or one pound of hard bread, or one pound four ounces of corn meal."

Source: Billings, John D. *Hardtack and Coffee or The Unwritten Story of Army Life*, George M. Smith & Company, Boston, MA (1887), p. 111.

An additional staple of the soldiers' diet was hardtack. This was a very hard biscuit or cracker made from flour, salt and water. Its name summed up its properties. It was so hard that it was difficult to bite into. Many times it wasn't particularly "fresh" either. Soldiers wrote of learning to soak it in coffee prior to eating it for two reasons. First, soaking the hardtack would help to soften it. Secondly, if it were soaked, any bugs or weevils that had infested it would float to the top of the coffee and could be skimmed off before consuming it. While it seems hard to imagine eating such a concoction, at times hardtack and coffee were just about all there was to eat, so there was little choice.

The afternoon would consist of more drilling, "housekeeping chores" such as cleaning and mending of clothes, and cleaning weapons. When these tasks were completed, the men had free time. Whittling, cards, chess, checkers, baseball (called rounders), reading and writing letters, reading newspapers and magazines, telling stories, and singing or making music were some of the activities that the men engaged in to pass the time.

Later in the afternoon there would be an inspection, followed by a dress parade. Then again the bugle would sound the call for the evening meal of supper. Each day would end with an evening roll call and the final bugle call of taps.

In the summer, the soldiers lived in tents. A common tent early in the war was the Silbey tent. Inspired by the Indian tipis he had seen in the West, Henry Silbey designed these tents in 1857. They were as large as 18 feet around and 12 feet high. A chimney from a special stove ran up through the top. It was designed for 12 men to sleep in comfortably, but at times it would accommodate as many as 20. Because the Silbey tent was large, it was difficult to transport. It was not long before other tents replaced it. The A tent, or wedge tent, was comprised of canvas stretched over a raised horizontal bar of about six feet in length. The ground area covered by the tent was about seven square feet. Even though it was designed for four, many times it would sleep six men. The hospital or wall tent was larger than the A tent and was different in that it had upright walls, enabling a person to stand up inside. Wall tents varied in size and were sometimes placed end-to-end, so that one long corridor resulted. Arrangements such as these were also used for field hospitals, hence the name "hospital tent." The tent most commonly used in the field or while men were camped in battle was the Dog or Shelter Tent. This tent was very small, able to accommodate only two men, and even then it was considered crowded. Soldiers commented that its size was about big enough for a dog, thus the name. When men were on the march, however, there were times when they had no tents at all and would have to rely on what shelter could be provided by the comfort of a rubber blanket.

Such tight quarters meant that many men had to learn to share cramped sleeping space. After long days of drilling, marching or battle, men needed to be able to sleep to renew their strength. The practice of "spooning" became a necessity in an attempt to sleep as comfortably as possible in such a small space. The men would sleep on their sides, all in the same direction, facing the next man's back. When it came time to turn over, all would have to turn at once. The men in the middle would remain warm on cold nights, while the man on each end would be cold on one side or the other, depending upon which side they were sleeping.

This closeness of quarters was not only uncomfortable, it was also cause for unsanitary conditions. Men would easily pass illnesses from one to another, especially diseases that they had not previously been exposed to, such as measles. Because bathing was not a regular activity, virtually all the men had body lice and this caused discomfort that simply became the norm.

In the winter, the troops would attempt to set up camp in a wooded area. This would provide the necessary building materials for building log walls that would be outfitted with a canvas tent cover. Tents or cabins were built in rows that resembled streets.

The camp itself was like a town of sorts with tents for kitchens, the hospital or doctor's tent, officers' quarters, and sutlers (peddlers who would set up shops for selling goods to soldiers). It was a "home away from home", and men spent more time in camp than they did on the battlefield.



LESSON 4

ON THE BATTLEFIELD AT SHILOH

Activities

1. Students will read the account of Shiloh written by George Squier.
2. Using the textbook, books from the Media Center, or information from online sources, provide students with background information about the Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing). Students can design and write the front page of a newspaper as it might have appeared in Indiana, detailing the Battle of Shiloh.
3. A short script describing the Battle of Shiloh can be written and read or performed by students. A good source for soldier vocabulary and Civil War slang can be found at the following websites:

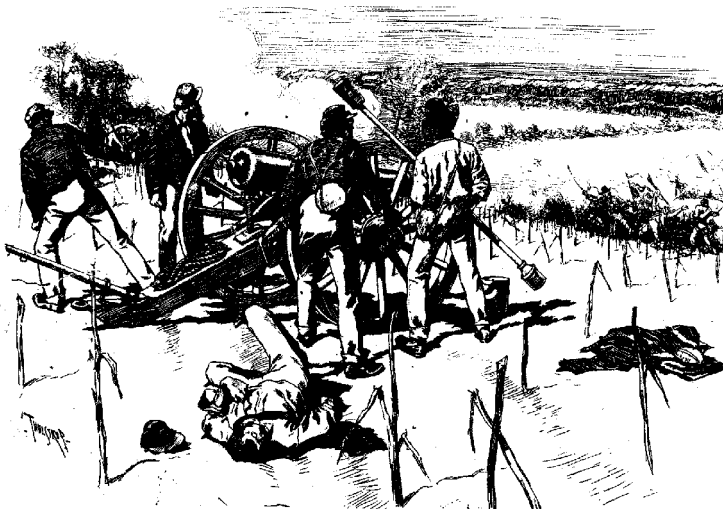
www.geocities.com/Pentagon/8279/Civil.html

www.geocities.com/Pentagon/8279/soldier.html

3. Research can be conducted on additional Civil War soldiers from Indiana and their wartime experiences. Back issues of the Indiana Magazine of History are an excellent source. The following websites provide brief biographies for a number of Hoosiers who served in the Civil War.

<http://civilwarindiana.com/biographies/index.html>

<http://www.mach500.net/liggetkw/incw/cw.htm>



HANDOUT 4

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Vocabulary

fervor: enthusiasm

haversack: a bag for carrying rations

pillage: to ransack or loot

valor: courage in battle

On the Battlefield

The following selection is an edited personal account written by an Indiana soldier. George Squier of Halls Corner in Allen County, Indiana was a soldier in the 44th Indiana Volunteer Infantry. This letter to his wife Ellen chronicles his Shiloh experiences. This primary source has been edited for clarity, primarily the spelling has been changed to reflect modern spelling.

GEORGE SQUIER

April 13, 1862 Pittsburg Landing Tennessee

...The fight (now if this "bores" you say so, or at least don't read it) commenced at 3 o'clock Sunday morning. Our pickets were driven in, and in 15 minutes the enemy were within our lines. The regiments along our lines held them in check, retreating slowly; the enemy stopping to **pillage** our camps. At 6:00 in the morning the fight became quite general. We heard the discharges of musketry and artillery, and now we had a work to perform. But we little imagined the extent of that work. All examined our arms (and) filled our canteens with water, waiting for the call. Nor did we wait long. At 10 minutes past six the long roll sounded throughout our camp, and in five minutes we were in line of battle on our parade ground. As we stood there (some five minutes) the thought passed through my mind of the thousands so full of life. Now how many will return? And strange music, too, for that beautiful Sabbath morning were the officers passing with lightning speed and in loud voices giving commands. The rattle of sabers

and carbines, clattering of hoofs, jarring of artillery as they hurried over the rough road, the booming of a hundred cannon and the discharge of thousands of muskets. The command was given: "right-face" and we moved off to the scene of action. We soon met wounded men, citizens, and women fleeing to the boats for security. We met some with the loss of fingers, some without a hand, some with a broken leg or arm; in fact, (they were) wounded in every conceivable place. I mention this because at that time it rather daunted my **fervor** and for the first time I doubted my courage.

...we were stationed in the woods on a slight raise of ground with thick underbrush in front. We waited but a short time when the order was passed along our line "fire" and the discharge of 800 muskets broke upon the air, as we lay on the ground to load, raised and fired; we fought for nearly an hour when the enemy fled the field with tremendous loss. Our company lost one man killed and two wounded.

...Right here you may wish to know how I "stood fire." I will tell you while lying on the ground and just before we received orders to fire, I simply breathed faith: "Ever kind Father preserve me." When I arose and the firing (began I) was as cool and composed as if sitting down for a chat or shooting squirrels. The bullets whistled over our head, shells bursting all around us, balls whizzing past, tearing trees, etc. At 10 o'clock we were again attacked, but this time they could not stand our fire more than about 40 minutes when they again fled. Colonel rode up & down our lines, his face fairly shining, (and) said "boys, can you give that a cheer," and we did give three rousing cheers. A bullet passed through the Colonel's coat sleeve, also one through Platt's coat sleeve and grazed his side, but did not cut through the skin. While I was lying on my face a bullet whistled over my head and passed through my **haversack**.

Our position in the line of battle was about the center of the left wing of our army. Up to about 12 o'clock we were not really fighting more than 1 3/4 hours (our regiment I mean). At 12 we were ordered to our left

to support our battery. While marching along we could see scores of dead men and horses stretched on the ground. We had scarcely taken our position when A. Willson from Maysville was shot through the arm, and I was ordered to take him to the rear about 80 rods to a cluster of old buildings, where I bound up his arm. Scarcely was it done when Mr. Shook came in in a similar condition. The first and only time during the day that I felt like dodging was in going back to our Company through the perfect shower of bullets, grape & canister shot, shell and ball. Every few minutes I would catch myself dodging or winking to screen myself from the messengers of death that flew so thickly all around, above and in front. We had taken position on quite a raise of ground. There were few trees and no underbrush either in front or rear, and (we) were in full view of the enemy, exposed to the most deadly fire from infantry and artillery. Here is where fell many, very many of the brave sons of Indiana. We held our position for hours, advancing and retreating by turns until about 4 o'clock, when the enemy succeeded in planting a battery to our left and a little in the rear. When we were subject to a most deadly crossfire besides the fire in front, this was rather more than even Indiana valor could withstand, and we were ordered to retreat.

...To give you an idea of how we suffered, let me tell you we Company D went onto the field 217 files of men and at 4 P.M. when I left there were only 8 files, and at 5 only 5 files or 10 men, the balance having been killed or wounded.

Source: Doyle, Julie A., John David Smith, and Richard M. McMurry, *This Wilderness War: The Civil War Letters of George W. Squier, Hoosier Volunteer*, The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, TN. 1998, pages 10-12.

The letters of George Squier are deposited at the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Sources

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Davis, William C., *The Civil War Cookbook*. Courage Books: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1993).

Doyle, Julie A., John David Smith, and Richard M. McMurry; *This Wilderness of War: The Civil War Letters of George W. Squier, Hoosier Volunteer*. The University of Tennessee Press: Knoxville, Tennessee (1998).

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Online Sources

American Civil War Homepage

<http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/warweb.html>

EXTENSIVE list of links, ranging from individual states' information to Matthew Brady's Civil War Photographs, National Archive information, Library of Congress links, reenactors, women, U.S Colored Troops, and medicine. You name it, it's there.

Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing)

<http://www.civilwarhome.com/shiloh.htm>

This page is an excellent resource, with information on the following topics: Confederate and Union (Ambrose Bierce) description of the battle, timeline, Confederate order of battle, Union order of battle, and links to official records pages, among others.

Civil War 9th Massachusetts Battery, Civil War Slang

<http://www.geocities.com/Pentagon/8279/Civil.html>

Civil War slang and a list of definitions are provided here. Maintained by Webmaster Lorrie Farr (reenacting as Amalia McCarty, laundress).

Civil War Indiana

www.civilwarindiana.com

Excellent resource for Indiana Civil War history. Includes biographies and regimental histories, reenactment events, soldier search, and African American soldiers of Indiana, to name just a few.

Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum

www.state.in.us/iwm/civilwar/index.html

Located in the base of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on the Circle in Indianapolis, the Colonel Eli Lilly Civil War Museum offers a virtual tour on its website. Directions to the museum, volunteer information, and a number of valuable links are also included.

CWSAC Battle Summaries

<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/battles/tn003.htm>

The National Park Service provides a general summary of the major battles of the war.

Indiana in the Civil War

<http://www.mach500.net/liggetkw/incw/cw.htm>

Diaries, letters, stories, regimental histories, biographies, genealogy and Hoosier connections abound in this excellent resource for Indiana Civil War History for teachers or students.

Shiloh Maps

<http://www.civilwarhome.com/shilohmap.htm>

Maps of both days of the battle are included. This is a page from a website entitled: "Shotgun's Home of the American Civil War."

Walden Font Company

www.waldenfont.com

All graphics in these lessons are from The Civil War Press compact disk. It is available for purchase through Walden Font Company, Purveyors of Historic Fonts and Clip-Art.